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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2540
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SENSITIVE
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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: NEW AFGHANISTAN ASSISTANCE AGENCY?

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¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

¶2. (SBU) SUMMARY: On October 14, Talgat Kaliyev, head of the Kazakhstani Ministry of Foreign Affairs' new policy planning staff, told the DCM that with FM Saudabayev's endorsement, he is exploring plans to establish a bureau within the Foreign Ministry to coordinate Kazakhstan's planned $50 million in assistance to Afghanistan. If successful, this Agency could eventually become Kazakhstan's variant of the Agency for International Development, primarily focused on South and Central Asia. Kaliyev asked for U.S. government "recommendations, advice, and vision" on the concept, and stated his plan to travel to Washington for consultations. END SUMMARY.

¶3. (SBU) Talgat Kaliyev, head of the Foreign Ministry's new policy planning staff, briefed the DCM on his plan to develop an agency to coordinate government-wide assistance to Afghanistan on October 14. In his new job for just three weeks, Kaliyev, echoing both President Nazarbayev and FM Saudabayev, called Afghanistan one of the most urgent issues. In the Kazakhstani government, many Ministries are involved in this arena, but they lack coordination, he said. Kaliyev stated his perception based on two years in Astana that "If you want to do something, you must do it yourself with the shortest chain of command. Otherwise, it takes a very long time." Therefore, with the Foreign Minister's support, he is proposing the creation of a unit within the Kazakhstani Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the working title "Kazakh-Afghan Bureau of Assistance." This bureau would primarily focus on civilian aid in fields such as education, health, agriculture, and construction, and ensure "proper use" of Kazakhstan's $50 million commitment to Afghanistan.

¶4. (SBU) To establish the agency in the near future, Kaliyev plans to work with Kazakhstan's Ambassador-at-Large to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Shakrat Nurushev. Once Nurushev returns from his trip to Beijing, Kaliev hopes to send a proposal to the Prime Minister's office with a draft decree that would establish the bureau. At the same time, he proposes to recruit seven staffers with regional experience, primarily from the Foreign Ministry. The bureau's first task would be to collect information from every Ministry and relevant Embassies. It would then share this

information with the United States and ask for feedback. Based on these needs, it would seek information from companies. Finally, the agency would direct assistance "without the bureaucracy. It will be the American way of making business," he concluded proudly.

¶5. (SBU) Kaliyev said that once the proposal is completed, he hopes it will be implemented by a decree of the prime minister. He requested U.S. support for the proposal when it becomes official. In order to establish relations and gain "recommendations, advice, and vision" on the concept, Kaliyev plans to travel to Washington. He promised to share a concept paper with the Embassy once he develops one. In the long term, Kaliyev hopes that President Obama might send a letter of appreciation for the agency. Kaliyev also shared his aspiration that the agency could become in a few years Kazakhstan's Agency for International Development focused primarily on South and Central Asia.

¶6. (SBU) In response to questions about Kazakhstan's current plan to bring to Kazakhstan thousands of Afghani undergraduate students, Kaliyev stated that the program remains a priority. However, there has been a delay in signing the agreement, which Kaliyev speculated may have resulted from language questions. Still, Kaliev affirmed the Ministry of Education's strong commitment, and the Minister's plans to travel to Kabul, possibly in December.

¶7. (SBU) COMMENT: The policy planning function is a new one in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Kaliyev, formerly Political Counselor in Washington when FM Saudabayev was ambassador, is looking for concrete ways to advance initiatives of the president and foreign minister, including a larger role for Kazakhstan in Afghanistan. The bureau is not a fully formed idea, but Kaliyev may be attempting to influence both domestic and international politics with this ambitious proposal. Inside the government, this plan would give the

Foreign Ministry significant power over diffuse assistance efforts. At the same time, it would allow the Foreign Ministry to better extend its reach internationally, by ensuring that Kazakhstan's efforts are known throughout the world, and potentially earning it a seat at the international donors' table. Kaliyev is reaching out in the early planning stage, which could present us a useful opportunity to participate in another phase of Kazakhstan's development as a strategic partner. About a decade ago, U.S. consultation and technical assistance helped to establish Kazakhstan's now well-functioning Security Council, modeled on Washington's National Security Council. END COMMENT.

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